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East Bay

MAY/JUNE 2009

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Gains Even in a Down Economy

Adding value to your home beyond the bubble.

By Nancy Schmitz, cid

In this economy, people are uncertain about what to do with their homes. Whether staying in your home or selling and relocating, now is the perfect time to get some professional advice.

If selling is your objective, new amenities can give you the edge on the competition. A recent survey of realtors by region has shown that kitchen remodeling takes the edge with recouped costs at sale and the San Francisco Bay area tops the list with a 135% return on investment.

If you are not in the market to sell now, the best strategy is to put money into your kitchens and baths, enjoy the living space and reap the benefits. How we live now—casual elegance, open floor plans, integration of technology and connection to the outdoors epitomizes today's attitudes towards the making of a home. En suite bathrooms are making private spaces even more private, while open floor plans put more of the family in the same room and take on a myriad of functions.

Smart homes with expanded kitchen capabilities have evolved from the old "triangle" plan to include space for multiple chefs or friends helping and include storage and recycling solutions, beverage centers and space for homework and/or home office areas. To accommodate all of these activities the "five zone" idea allows room for prep/cooking/cleaning, perishables, & non-perishables. Organizing these zones to work together while separating activities cuts down on foot steps and allows multiple activities to co-exist without tripping over one another.

You will need guidance for solutions to a dozen appliances strewn over the countertop, questions of marble vs. stainless, sufficient storage space, optimal work flow, keeping up with changing technology like smart fridges, multimedia ventilation

now, keeping up with changing technology like smart fridges, multimedia ventilation hoods, micro brew coffee microwaves. Knowledge about the eco challenges, the newest in plumbing and lighting, touchless faucets, touch pad screens, radiant heat, breathe easy cabinetry, trends vs. lasting design, performance and quality.

So, how to create a home that will reflect your taste and lifestyle? It's all in the details.

The more planning upfront, the happier you will be with the results. Great projects start with the big picture, so dream a little before wading into the details. Set priorities for the top of the list and understand this is a process.

Even if you feel you have the knack, time and resources, nothing can compare to the success you will achieve working with a professional interior designer. You may find decorators, contractors and even well meaning friends offering design services, but they simply do not have the expertise required. Look for a Certified Interior Designer to assure they have the education, ability and experience to protect the health, safety and welfare of you and your family.

Nancy Schmitz is Principal Designer at N.A. Schmitz Design Group in Mill Valley. You can find information on Ms. Schmitz and other Certified Interior Designers in your area at www.ccidc.org/cidpages.

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